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"Hast thou aught more to declare?" said the king to Fernando, in a tone of displeasure.

Again the boy trembled, and looked towards Garcia, whose eagle eye was like a guilty spell upon him.

"Let him look at the queen as he speaks," said Sancho.

The boy turned towards his mother, but his cheek reddened as he did so, and he cast his eyes towards the ground without speaking.

"Speak on!" said the king.

"He will not speak!" said Elvira; "he will not make a liar of Nature, who is telling the truth for him in his cheeks and eyes! Look, monsters, the tears are coming to his eyes. Oh holy drops, ye should be treasured among saintly relics—ye shall be balm to these parched and thirsty lips!" And here the queen bent to the earth, and kissed the tear-drops on the ground which had fallen from Fernando's eyes.

"Fernando, speak!" said Garcia.

In a voice broken by sobs and terror, Fernando began to say that he had seen Don Pedro stealing by night to the queen's chamber, when he was interrupted by Elvira, who again clung to him with frantic earnestness.

"Thou sawest it not! Oh, say thou sawest it not! My boy, the heavy wrath of God will fall upon thee if thou dost not unsay this fearful falsehood. I am not cursing thee, but I would avert the curse. Thou must unsay it. It is not possible mine own flesh could *all* rebel against me. What is it has bewitched thee, Fernando, to do what devils would leave undone? Dost thou know what thou art doing to me? They will burn thy poor mother in the market-place for an adulteress! Thou wilt give thy mother to die in the torments of the damned—thy mother, that never crossed thee in thy ways—that fed thee with the milk of her breasts—that rejoiced in thy beauty. Oh, my God! oh, my God! have pity upon me, and soften this boy's heart!" said she, looking up for a moment, and then coaxingly fawning upon Fernando, with a faint smile upon her features. She continued—"My child! my pretty boy Fernando! wilt thou not unsay those wicked words? Ah, let me kiss thee, and say I forgive thee, and we shall be mother and son together for the rest of our days in some far off place out of the ways of these people. I will love thee better than they, Fernando. They are killing thy soul now, and they will kill thy body after, as they are killing mine, if thou dost not hearken to me. Oh, that I might have life and length of days, only to be away with thee where I could look into thy blue eyes and play with thy golden curls from morning till night. Oh, child, have mercy upon me!"

"Mother!" cried Fernando, throwing himself upon the queen's neck, "forgive me, and I will unsay all!"

Elvira wound her arms about the infant's form, kissed him without saying a word, and fainted at his feet.

"Her artifices have prevailed with the boy," said Garcia, with ill-dissembled rage, "but the testimony of others is not to be thus overborne."

"Wilt thou enter the lists against her champion, if any dare to defend her with his sword?" said the king.

Garcia was silent.

"If thou wilt not," said Sancho, "Elvira shall be declared innocent, and her accusers traitors."

"Let her champion appear, then," replied Garcia. "What my tongue asserts, my sword shall ever prove. There lies my guage," and he threw his glove into the centre of the floor.

But in all that crowded assembly there was not one who came forward to take up the guage of Garcia. They all pitied the queen, and believed her innocent, but the dread of the future tyrant was too powerful a motive to keep them, so far at least, on his side.

"At the end of three days," said the king, "if no champion appear for the queen, she shall perish by the flames, and with her, her alleged paramour."

The lists were prepared, and at the noon of the second day a knight in bright silver armour, whose name was unknown, appeared in the queen's defence. His vizor was drawn over his face, and his device gave no clue to the curious. The whole court was assembled to witness the combat, and Elvira occupied a seat nearest to the side at which her champion appeared. The signal was given, and the contest commenced. It was soon decided. The unknown knight quickly unhorsed his antagonist, and after a brief struggle with the sword, Garcia fell to the earth desperately wounded.

"Confess the innocence of the queen," said the unknown

knight, in a voice which struck Garcia to the soul, "or thou diest on the spot."

"She is innocent!" feebly articulated Garcia, as he writhed in the agony of his wounds.

Taking up the sword of his vanquished adversary, the unknown cavalier brought it to the feet of Elvira, and then, gracefully bending on one knee, he lifted the vizor from his casque, and for the first time the queen knew that she had been indebted for life and the preservation of her fair fame to the son of the king by her Moorish rival.

"Madam," said Ramiro, "not to me alone, but to Caya thy friend, thy thanks are due. Thou hast been a sister to her—let me be a son to thee."

Elvira could only weep her thanks.

We find in Mariana, and also in Rodrigo of Toledo, that Sancho of Navarre, at his death, partitioned his kingdom thus:—To his eldest son Garcia he left Navarre and Biscay; to Gonsalo he left Ribagorza; to Fernando, Castile; and Arragon to a natural son named Ramiro. This was that Ramiro of whom mention is made in the preceding narrative. But we do not find in any of the old authors (and much we wonder that any event connected with so curious and touching a piece of history could have escaped them) that this same Ramiro enjoyed the lordship of Arragon with Blanca, the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the cavalier Don Pedro Sesse.

R. M.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTING CLEAN FLAX SEED.

IN recent numbers of the Penny Journal, Martin Doyle has published two valuable papers upon the necessity of selecting good seed, and I would wish to call the attention of the cultivators of flax, who form so numerous a body amongst the small farmers of the north and west of Ireland, to the absolute necessity of attending to the seed of that plant, and not to purchase the cheaper seed that is sometimes offered to them, in preference to that which, although rather more expensive, is yet free from the seeds of a very noxious weed which are usually mixed with the cheaper flax-seed. The weed to which I refer is one of those curious plants, which, from their peculiar structure, are unable to draw their nourishment directly from the earth, but are obliged to feed themselves by sucking the juices of other plants, and thus destroying them, or weakening them so greatly as to prevent their producing a crop that will repay the cultivator for his labour and expense. In the case of the flax, the weed grows from seeds deposited in the earth with the seed of the flax, and at first appears as a slender pale thread, twisting about in different directions until it meets with one of the stems of the flax, when it immediately twists itself round it, and produces curious little knobs upon its inner side, which pierce the outer coat or bark of the stalk of the flax, and suck from it the juices which it has drawn from the ground, and prepared for its own nourishment. The root of the weed then withers away, but the weed itself commences its most vigorous growth, for until it had obtained a victim upon which to feed, it had been unable to produce any thing except the slender fibre that I have already mentioned, and would have soon died if it had not succeeded in seizing upon the flax. Its stem then increases in thickness, and, twisting round all the flax plants that it can reach, it receives enough of nourishment to produce its flowers, which form pretty little yellowish white heads, of about half the size of a nut, consisting of numerous small flowers so placed together as closely to resemble a small mulberry in form and appearance, although not in colour. This weed is called Dodder, or by botanists *Cuscuta epilinum*, and is commonly to be found in flax-fields in several parts of England and Scotland, but is happily less frequent in Ireland, although I have seen it (in 1840) in the county of Mayo. In England it often quite destroys the crop, and I understand that such was the case a few years since in the neighbourhood of Westport and Newport, county Mayo.

I have now to point out the way to avoid this pest. It is found that the seed of flax obtained from America is quite free from it, but that it is nearly always very plentiful in seed from Odessa and other parts of Russia. Now, the Russian seed is cheaper than that from America, and so the poor people are tempted to buy the former in preference to the latter, although, by following an opposite course, they would escape

the risk of loss which results from the use of seed which is mixed with seeds of the dodder.

This I consider as a remarkable proof of the necessity of obtaining clean seed rather than cheap, and deserves in my opinion to be made generally known throughout Ireland by means of the Penny Journal. I conclude by saying to all cultivators of flax, When buying your seed, always ask for that from America, and do not be tempted by the cheaper but dirty seed from Russia, as by doing this you will avoid the most destructive weed to which the crop is liable.

C. C. B.

ORIGIN AND MEANINGS OF IRISH FAMILY NAMES.

BY JOHN O'DONOVAN.

First Article.

It has for a long time appeared to me a desirable object, as regards the history of Ireland and the information of the Irish people, to communicate to the public a correct account of the origin and signification of the proper names, tribe names, and surnames of the people of Ireland; more especially as some of the popular writers of the last century have misled them generally into the most erroneous notions with regard to these classes of names. The errors of these writers have not only been adopted by the usually shallow compilers of county surveys, county histories, and other topographical works down to the present time, but also to some extent by writers of a higher order and greater learning and research, as Lanigan and Moore. Indeed, strange as the fact may seem, it is nevertheless unquestionable that there are very few in the country whose ideas upon this subject are consonant with the truth; and hence, upon most occasions on which an Irishman adopts an anglicised form of his Christian name and surname, the effect of the alteration is such as completely to conceal, and not unfrequently to misrepresent, their original orthography and meaning. On this account it becomes unavoidably necessary for me, before I enter upon the series of articles which I propose furnishing on this subject, to exhibit and expose the ignorance of those writers to whom I have alluded, and whose theories have produced so erroneous an impression upon the minds of the Irish people; and to this object I purpose to devote the present introductory paper.

The fallacies which I have to expose were unknown to the Irish people until towards the close of the last century: the writers of an earlier period having been too well informed to lead their readers into error. But their works being for the most part in a dead language, and very rarely to be met with, they ceased to have an influence on the public mind, and left the way open for a new race of writers, very ignorant of the ancient language and history of Ireland, to impose their crude theories upon the uninstructed reader. A society of such persons, of whom General Vallancey, Mr Beauford,* and Dr Ledwich, were the most active, was formed for the purpose of giving to the public a series of essays on the antiquities, ancient literature, and topography of Ireland; and the result of their joint labours made its appearance in a work published periodically under the title of "*Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*," and since popularly called Vallancey's *Collectanea*. These gentlemen, however, after a time found that their systems had nothing in common, each considering the other as insufficiently informed on the subjects treated of, and I think, with justice; for, as I trust I shall be able to show on a future occasion, all were alike ignorant of the matters they professed perfectly to understand. But though the labours of these gentlemen contributed generally to the propagation of erroneous theories on the subject, it was a work of Mr Beauford's, published in No. 11 of the *Collectanea*, which, treating more immediately of this subject, has had the greatest influence on the popular mind; an influence less owing to any celebrity attached to his own name than to that of Vallancey, whose sanction and approbation this work is generally supposed to have received. With this writer originated the novel theory that the names of tribes and families in Ireland, as usual among the Saxons and Normans, were derived from earlier appellations of the territories and localities which they occupied. To establish this hypothesis he adopts a process of etymological investigation unparalleled in the annals of

antiquarian research. In the first place, he takes the liberty of dividing the words into as many parts as he thinks proper; secondly, he makes such changes in the vocables thus obtained as he finds convenient to his purpose; thirdly, he gives each of these words new meanings of his own; and lastly, he places the tribes whose names he thus explains in localities which many of them never occupied.

As the errors of this writer, though so long before the public, have never been sufficiently exposed, I shall here undertake the task, by the exhibition of a few examples of his process of investigation, taken without selection, and given as a fair specimen of the whole. It will be necessary for me, however, in fairness, to quote in the first instance the author's own account of the theory which he has put forward to account, in his novel manner, for the origin of the names of men and tribes in Ireland.

"On the increase of population and the introduction of agriculture, these wandering tribes were under the necessity of confining themselves to certain permanent districts; which districts were generally denominated either from their situation or quality of the soil, and from which also the inhabitants obtained their collective appellation; whence, in the most ancient Irish poems and histories, we frequently find *clan* and *sliocht* added to the name of the country, to signify the inhabitants; as *clan Cuilean*, *sliocht Breoghain*, and *sliocht Gae*; wherefore the children and race of any division were the invariable names by which the ancient Hibernian sept were distinguished from the remotest antiquity, and not, as frequently asserted, the children and descendants of their respective leaders."

Again, "The chiefs of every district were elected from the elder branches of the dynasts; and the kings of the principalities from the senior chief of the subordinate districts, who on their advancement to the dignity obtained the name of the district or clan over which they presided; it being an universal custom amongst all the Celtic tribes to denominate the noblesse, with their other appellations, from the place of their residence; a custom in some measure yet retained in the Highlands of Scotland. The variety of names used by the ancient Irish have occasioned great confusion in their history; for before the tenth century surnames were not hereditary, and prior to the establishment of the Christian religion in this country no person was distinguished by one permanent nomination. It is true, during their pagan state every child at his birth received a name generally from some imaginary divinity under whose protection he was supposed to be; but this name was seldom retained longer than the state of infancy, from which period it was generally changed for others arising from some perfection or imperfection of the body, the disposition and qualities of the mind, achievements in war or the chase, the place of birth, residence, &c. so that it frequently happened that the same person was distinguished by several appellations. Our ancient historians, not properly attending to this, have committed great errors in relating the transactions of early periods, by asserting the same action to be performed by several different people, which in reality was performed by one only, thereby throwing their history and antiquities into too distant a period. A similar error has also been committed by not considering the dignitary names of the chiefs, who on their election to the government constantly obtained the name appertaining to the clan over whom they presided, or rather that of the district. These dignitary names becoming in the tenth century hereditary and family distinctions, created new difficulties to genealogists of latter ages."—*Collectanea*, vol. iii, p. 257.

Now, it will be very easy to prove that these assertions are wholly erroneous, and are mere conjectures, unsupported either by history or etymology. In the first place, the three instances above given to show that the words *clan* and *sliocht* were prefixed to the names of territories among the Irish, instead of supporting the author's assumption, go to prove the very contrary, for in the first two instances the names adduced are not names of territories, but of men; and with regard to the third instance, there was no such name among the ancient Irish, and it is a pure fabrication of Beauford's own imagination! As for his assertion that in the time of paganism every child at his birth received a name generally from some imaginary divinity under whose protection he was supposed to be, it is another pure fabrication; there is no authority in any of our ancient documents that men were called after their pagan deities, except in three instances, in the darkest period of Irish history; and even from these it does not appear that

* Let not the reader confound this Beauford with the author of the ecclesiastical map of Ireland, for the latter was Dr Beaufort, and his works are distinguished for their accuracy.